

Uncertain Peace by HOPoverhere

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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Characters: Florence "Flo" (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Will Byers

Relationships: Joyce Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Will Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper

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Summary:

Hopper gets a scare from the Upside Down and Will reaches out to him.

The first time Hop and Will get to properly bond after Hop and Joyce get together.

Even though it is about something unpleasant.

Family fluff / Mentions of Jopper / Joyce and Flo are always right

Uncertain Peace

Author's Note:

Just a little thing I wrote between a duo I never delved into, and think the show should get them a proper bonding scene coz Will needs a proper dad and Hop is just good at it.

Hope you guys like it :)
Thanks for visiting.

"Hop, are you alright?" Flo asked in her usual semi-concerned way when it came to Hopper.

He managed to blurt out a 'yes' in between coughs.

She thought it was just a hangover - at one point it was a regular occurrence for the Chief of police to throw up in the station bathroom after one of those nights he had too often.

But Flo felt this was different. He hadn't showed up drunk or hungover to work for quite a while - ever since he took El in. He had also stopped taking his anti-depressants. Flo knew he had got to a good place in his life when he and Joyce Byers got together. The whole town knew, and Flo was one of the first to suspect, obviously, as she does about everything else around the station.

She left him alone, she knew he wouldn't like coddling. She just took an aspirin, a glass of water, and some of the biscuits she stashed in her drawer she knew he liked. She left them on his desk and went back to her's.

He got back in the office and felt miserable. He didn't even eat the biscuits. More out of worry rather than an unsettled stomach.

Flo urged him to go home, but he felt fine. He really did. Just, worried.

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Joyce came into the station, luckily on Wednesdays Melvald's closed for a whole hour after noon, so that gave her a nice break. As it had become routine, she'd come over to the station and they'd have lunch together.

"Hey Flo," she said as she came in.

"Hi Joyce. He's not feeling too well."

"What? What's wrong with him?" She asked, concerned.

"Don't know, he said he's fine. Gave him an aspirin and some biscuits. He took the aspirin and didn't eat the biscuits, Joyce."

Joyce thanked Flo, albeit panicked in her usual self.

"Hey," she said smiling as she entered his office.

He looked fine. In fact he was.

"Flo tells me you're sick."

"Oh she worries too much."

She was not convinced but despite her best efforts he kept changing the subject and being his normal self.

In fact he did seem fine.

She left and he could finally lose his act. He was worried about what he had just threw up.

He tried not to let himself get too carried away, but he knew what it was. It looked like it belonged in the Upside Down. And it came out of his mouth while he was supposed to be filling in reports at work.

"You know what Flo, I guess I better go. Don't feel too well after all."

"Tol' you so. Feel better Chief."

"Thanks." He smiled anxiously.

He went to the place he knew best: the local bar. He wasn't ready to

go home or to Joyce's yet. He didn't want El or Joyce or the boys see his worry.

He downed a couple of whiskeys, and knew just when to stop. He did not want to get drunk.

He just wanted some comfort. He went to get El from the cabin, picked up a few pizzas and went to Joyce's. He knew he'd forget a little about it when he spent some time with her.

They headed over and spent a quiet Wednesday evening there.

Joyce saw him a bit off, smoking a little more than his usual, gulping beer a little faster, and eating just a little.

As the kids went to Will's bedroom, Jonathan left to go to Nancy's, and the house quieted down a bit, she thought of asking him. He looked tense and any attempt at hiding it was futile.

"Hey, what's bothering you?" she asked, putting a soft hand on his shoulder.

He denied anything was wrong, but there was no fooling Joyce Byers.

He stood up and left to her room, somehow he felt safer there.

She followed him, worried and confused.

Will heard the commotion and thought they were fighting. He was so used to her and Lonnie fighting that he felt a tinge of fear when he thought of it happening again with Hop.

El was already asleep. He got up and tried to listen. He was a very quiet tip-toer, and he was good at hiding.

"Hop, hey, tell me what's wrong."

Will knew it was wrong of him to overhear their conversation, but Jonathan was not home so he needed to make sure his mom was okay.

"Joyce, I don't know." Hop was panicking. He could let it all out with Joyce. He felt safe.

He was sweating.

"I feel fine, I really do, but this morning I just had this really bad feeling in my stomach and I threw up."

"Oh that's alright." She stroked his back gently.

He stood up from the bed where they sat, pacing around.

"No, it's not. Something came out of my throat. I couldn't breathe."

"Something?!" She said worried and almost disgusted.

"Dammit. I didn't want to tell you, I don't want you to worry."

"Well, what is it?"

He took in a breath, as much as he could in his panicked state.

"Well, I don't know. It looked like a slug."

She was dumbfounded. "A slug?"

He pressed his lips together. "It looks like something from, well, you know. Hell."

Will was frozen still. He could not move nor talk nor breathe. He just wanted this to be over and now it's getting Hopper too.

He panicked and jumped back into bed, covering himself with blankets so he could see nothing nor hear anything.

"Hop," her eyes started to water, feeling herself getting sucked into all the thoughts and worries she had gone throughout the past 2 years.

"Hey, it's out now and I feel fine. I felt fine before. Just that moment only."

"Hop, we need to do something about this. We can't act like it's nothing."

"I know, I know. I'll talk to Dr Owens tomorrow. But tonight, let's just try not to think about it. Let's just try to sleep, it's been a long day."

She hugged him tightly. He wiped a tear from her face, still uncertain about what was going on inside him.

They went into bed and wrapped themselves together, both trying not to think too hard.

Joyce fell asleep after a while, a 12-hour shift and a scare like that taking their toll on her.

Hopper held her in his arms, more as a comfort for him rather than her sleeping self.

He let her drift away till it was safe to let her out of his arms.

He sat on the bed, trying his best not to wake up Joyce.

He put on his undershirt and a sweatpants he kept there. Despite being together for almost six months and with the kids open about them, he still felt uncomfortable walking around half-naked in her house, even if it was three in the morning and everyone was asleep.

He got out quietly, hoping to smoke the rest of his packet out on the porch.

As he got out of her room, he went to check on El and Will, but was distracted by the light in the living room and the little body clutching himself tightly on the couch.

He walked slowly to Will, the boy looking at him, his knees bent at his chest and his arms wrapped tightly around them, covered in the old blanket he liked so much.

"Hey bud, you okay?" Hopper asked the boy.

He couldn't talk. He was shivering.

"Hey, hey." Hop sat next to him, trying his best to remain calm.

"I heard what you said."

"What? What'd I say?"

"About, that.. thing."

Hopper could not breathe. There was no use in denying or sugar-coating it. This kid had been in hell and he knew all about it.

"It happened to me too. After I came back home."

"Really?" Hop was somewhat unsure whether he was relieved or more worried at the statement.

"Yea. But please don't tell mom. She doesn't know."

Hop bit his lip. He was going to say something.

"Alright, kid. I didn't want to tell her either, didn't want to worry her."

"Yea, me too. Do you feel sick?"

Hop was touched by this little kid asking him if he's sick.

"Actually, no." He tried to produce a smile as best he could.

"Yea, I didn't feel sick either. Not even after."

"That's a relief." He smiled at the boy.

Will started crying softly.

"This is all my fault."

"Hey, hey, no it's not. Nothing's your fault. It's those goddamn monkeys at the lab. It's gonna be alright, okay?" He was unsure if it was going to be alright or not, but the boy needed to hear that.

He put his arms around him, for the first time connecting on a higher level than they had shared before.

"Come on, it's alright Will."

"Please don't tell mom. Or Dr Owens."

"Yea, don't worry about that, I hate doctors too, remember?" He

smiled, moreso at that fact that that made Will laugh a little and calmed his tears down.

Joyce felt shaken and disoriented, despite waking up in her own bed. Her spine shook when she saw he was not there and could neither hear him in the kitchen.

She got up quickly putting on her old robe and went first to check in the bathroom.

In her rush she did not look over in the living room.

She saw him there, slumped on the couch with what looked like was going to be a big neck pain today.

She moved over to the couch only to see Will tucked under a blanket with a pillow against Hop, both sleeping soundly. Well, Hop was snoring.

Something in her felt okay, safe, somehow.

She tucked in Will's blanket and stroked Hop's beard. She did not want to wake them. It was 5 in the morning and the kids' Spring break after all.

She went to check on El, who was still asleep. Despite her telekinetic abilities, the kid was a deep sleeper. (Now, that she belonged to a family and not stuck in a lab and belonging to "Papa".)

She did not know whether Hop was going to be okay, or why he and Will were both sleeping on the couch when his nightmares had recently stopped. Perhaps they had returned.

She did not want to know. She was just happy that her man and her boy were both safe for a while and were both sleeping.

She was just thankful for the moment.

She went back to bed and amongst all her bad dreams and thoughts, she kept the image of the sofa outside her room in her mind.